

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Southern District of Ohio

In the Matter of the Search of

(Briefly describe the property to be searched
or identify the person by name and address)

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Case No. **1:23-MJ-00741**

Priority Mail Express Parcel, Tracking Number EI 697 884 878 US
addressed to Kolten Koromos, 18640 Savage rd, Belleville, MI, 48111
with a return address of Justin Elder, 3802 Hazel ave, Cin, OH.

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APPLICATION FOR A SEARCH WARRANT

I, a federal law enforcement officer or an attorney for the government, request a search warrant and state under penalty of perjury that I have reason to believe that on the following person or property (identify the person or describe the property to be searched and give its location):

Priority Mail Express Parcel, Tracking Number EI 697 884 878 US addressed to Kolten Koromos, 18640 Savage rd, Belleville, MI, 48111 with a return address of Justin Elder, 3802 Hazel ave, Cin, OH.

located in the Southern District of Ohio, there is now concealed (identify the person or describe the property to be seized):
A quantity of a controlled substance and/or proceeds which are evidence thereof, and/or contraband, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1).

The basis for the search under Fed. R. Crim. P. 41(c) is (check one or more):

- evidence of a crime;
- contraband, fruits of crime, or other items illegally possessed;
- property designed for use, intended for use, or used in committing a crime;
- a person to be arrested or a person who is unlawfully restrained.

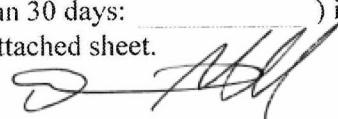
The search is related to a violation of: Title 21

<i>Code Section</i>	<i>Offense Description</i>
21 U.S.C. 841 (a) (1)	Possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance

The application is based on these facts:

See attached affidavit of U.S. Postal Inspector TFO Daniel J. Merrell

- Continued on the attached sheet.
- Delayed notice _____ days (give exact ending date if more than 30 days: _____) is requested under 18 U.S.C. § 3103a, the basis of which is set forth on the attached sheet.



Applicant's signature

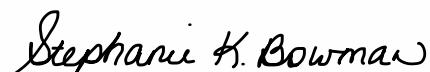
Daniel J. Merrell, U.S. Postal Inspector(TFO)

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed via Facetime video conference.

Date: Sep 12, 2023

City and state: Cincinnati, Ohio



Judge's signature

Stephanie K. Bowman
United States Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title



AFFIDAVIT

I, Daniel J. Merrell, having been duly sworn, depose and state:

1. I am a United States Postal Inspector Task Force Officer (TFO) with the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), assigned to the Cincinnati, Ohio Field Office. I have been employed by the United States Postal Inspection Service since September 15, 2022. I have investigative responsibility for southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky. Part of my investigative responsibility involves the use of the United States Mail in the illegal transporting of narcotics and other dangerous controlled substances and financial proceeds relating thereto.
2. I have gained experience from previous drug investigations, ongoing drug trafficking investigations, as well as information corroborated by confidential informants, other law enforcement officers, database records, and through surveillance. I am a sworn peace officer with the Kenton County Police Department and have been so employed for more than nine years. I have received over 300 hours of formal classroom training specifically in the area of drug investigations, to include Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Basic Narcotics Investigator School, Illicit Drug Investigations, Kentucky Drug Investigations, Undercover Operations, Drug Investigative Techniques, and several other relevant classes. I have also received the certificate of "Advanced Law Enforcement Officer" from the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council. I obtained my bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice through Liberty University. I am currently assigned to the Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force (NKDSF) and the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) with duties and responsibilities to investigate drug abuse and drug trafficking offenses. During my tenure, I have investigated, arrested, interviewed, and assisted in the conviction of numerous drug traffickers on both the State and Federal level. As a result, I have interviewed numerous individuals involved in drug trafficking. From these interviews, I have become familiar with the various methods used by drug traffickers to manufacture, conceal, package, transport and distribute their illegal product. I'm aware of the various means used by drug traffickers and drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) to import and distribute their product, launder their monies, and evade detection by law enforcement. Through these experiences I have learned that distributors of illegal drugs employ various methods to avoid detection and thwart efforts by law enforcement including the use of cellular telephone technology, counter and anti-surveillance techniques, elaborately planned smuggling schemes tied to legitimate businesses, false or fictitious identities, straw ownership, and coded communications and conversations. I have also learned that drug traffickers commonly possess firearms to protect their product and proceeds derived from the illegal sales. These investigations have included the use of a variety of investigative techniques and resources, including physical and electronic surveillance, the analysis of telephone records or other forms of communication, and the use of various types of informants and cooperating sources. I have also assisted in undercover operations, have authored and executed various arrest warrants as well as search warrants of residences and businesses.

3. This Affidavit is made in support of a search warrant for the following property, namely the package associated with the following United States Postal Service ("USPS") Priority Mail Express Parcel bearing Tracking Number:

- a. **EI 697 884 878 US** (the "Subject Package")

This Affidavit is made in support of a warrant to search the **Subject Package** for evidence of a crime as well as contraband, fruits of a crime or other items illegally possessed in relation to the following offense:

- a. Possession with Intent to Distribute Controlled Substances, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, § 841.

Because this Affidavit is submitted in support of the application of the United States to search the **Subject Package**, it does not include every fact known concerning this investigation. I have set forth facts and circumstances that I have relied upon to establish probable cause to justify the issuance of a warrant to search the **Subject Package**. The **Subject Package** is currently being held at the USPIS Cincinnati Field Office.

4. Based on my training and experience, I have become aware that drug traffickers frequently use Priority Mail Express and/or Priority Mail, services offered by the USPS, to transport narcotics and other dangerous controlled substances. As a result of investigations and successful controlled substance prosecutions where Priority Mail Express and/or Priority Mail were used, I have learned of certain characteristics associated with other Priority Mail Express and/or Priority Mail items previously identified as containing narcotics or other dangerous controlled substances. Some of these characteristics include (but are not necessarily limited to or used on every occasion): false or non-existent return address, addressee is not known to receive mail at the listed delivery address, the package is heavily taped, the package is mailed from a known drug source location, labeling information contains misspellings, the label contains an illegible waiver signature, unusual odors emanating from the package, and the listed address is located in an area of known or suspected drug activity. I am aware that packages containing illegal narcotics can sometimes have correct return address or addressee information. Narcotics traffickers will use legitimate names of residents with or without their permission and knowledge in an attempt to conceal their illegal activities.
5. On or about September 12, 2023, U.S. Postal Inspectors identified and intercepted the **Subject Package** at the Cincinnati Processing and Distribution Center located within the Southern District of Ohio.

The **Subject Package** is further described as:

USPS Priority Mail Express Parcel bearing Tracking Number: EI 697 884 878 US

Weighing approximately 1 pounds and 2.0 ounces, in a priority mail flat rate envelope. Postage paid was \$28.75

Sender: Justin Elder
3802 Hazel ave
Cin, OH

Addressee: Kolten Koromos
18640 Savage rd
Belleville, MI
48111

6. I observed the **Subject Package** and reviewed USPS tracking information, which indicated it was mailed from the Norwood Post Office, in Cincinnati, Ohio on September 11, 2023.
7. I searched the TLO database for the listed sender of the **Subject Package**. TLO is an investigative platform available to law enforcement and other government investigators that contains public-record data about people and businesses. The information obtained from the system indicated that “Justin Edler” is associated with that address.
8. I searched the TLO database for the listed addressee of the **Subject Package**. The information obtained from the system indicated that “Kolten Koromos” is not associated with that address. TLO does show that “Kolten Koromos” was previously associated with that address.
9. On or about September 12, 2023, Postal Inspectors arranged for Deputy Nick Poole, Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office, to utilize a narcotics canine to check the **Subject Package**. Deputy Poole and his canine “Akim” are a currently certified narcotics team. The team is certified by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission and the Ohio Office of the Attorney General. Deputy Poole reports that “Akim” passed all of his examinations and has successfully located hidden drugs in the past; I therefore consider “Akim” to be reliable. Deputy Poole was at the USPIS Cincinnati Field Office, where the **Subject Package** was placed in a separate office among several other similar packages and presented to “Akim”, who alerted positively to the presence or odor of a controlled substance upon the **Subject Package**. Attached to this Affidavit, and incorporated by reference, is a photocopy of the narcotic canine handler's record of examination.
10. Based upon my experience and training, this information, along with the positive alert of narcotic canine “Akim,” is indicative of the **Subject Package** containing narcotics or proceeds relating thereto.

11. Based upon the information contained in this Affidavit, I believe that there is probable cause to believe that the **Subject Package** will contain evidence and/or contraband, fruits of crime, or other items illegally possessed. Therefore, a search warrant to open the **Subject Package** is requested.

Further, your Affiant sayeth naught.



Daniel J. Merrell
U.S. Postal Inspector (TFO)

Subscribed and sworn to and before me this 12th day of September 2023 by reliable electronic means, specifically, FaceTime video conference.

Stephanie K. Bowman
Stephanie K. Bowman
United States Magistrate Judge





United States Postal Inspection Service
Pittsburgh Division

OFFICER AFFIDAVIT

I, DEPUTY N. POOLE, AM, AND HAVE BEEN, EMPLOYED BY THE HAMILTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, SINCE 2004. AMONG OTHER DUTIES, I AM CURRENTLY THE ASSIGNED HANDLER OF NARCOTICS DETECTION CANINE "AKIM", WHICH IS TRAINED AND CERTIFIED IN THE DETECTION OF THE PRESENCE OR ODOR OF NARCOTICS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

Marijuana, Cocaine, Heroin, Methamphetamines, and their derivatives.

ON 9/12/2023, AT THE REQUEST OF POSTAL INSPECTOR D. MERRELL I RESPONDED TO THE USPIS CINCINNATI FIELD OFFICE WHERE "AKIM" DID ALERT TO AND INDICATE UPON THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED ITEM:

Priority Mail Express Parcel, Tracking Number EI 697 884 878 US, addressed to Kolten Koromos, 18640 Savage rd, Belleville, MI, 48111 with a return address of Justin Elder, 3802 Hazel ave, Cin, OH.

BASED ON MY TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE AND THAT OF "AKIM", I CONSIDER THE ABOVE DESCRIBED ITEM TO CONTAIN WITHIN OR UPON THE PRESENCE OR ODOR OF A NARCOTIC OR OTHER DANGEROUS CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Poole" followed by the date "9/12/23".

(Signature and Date)